

*Frank Stephens
Field Notes, 1920*

March 28 - April 1, 1920

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

March 28 1920

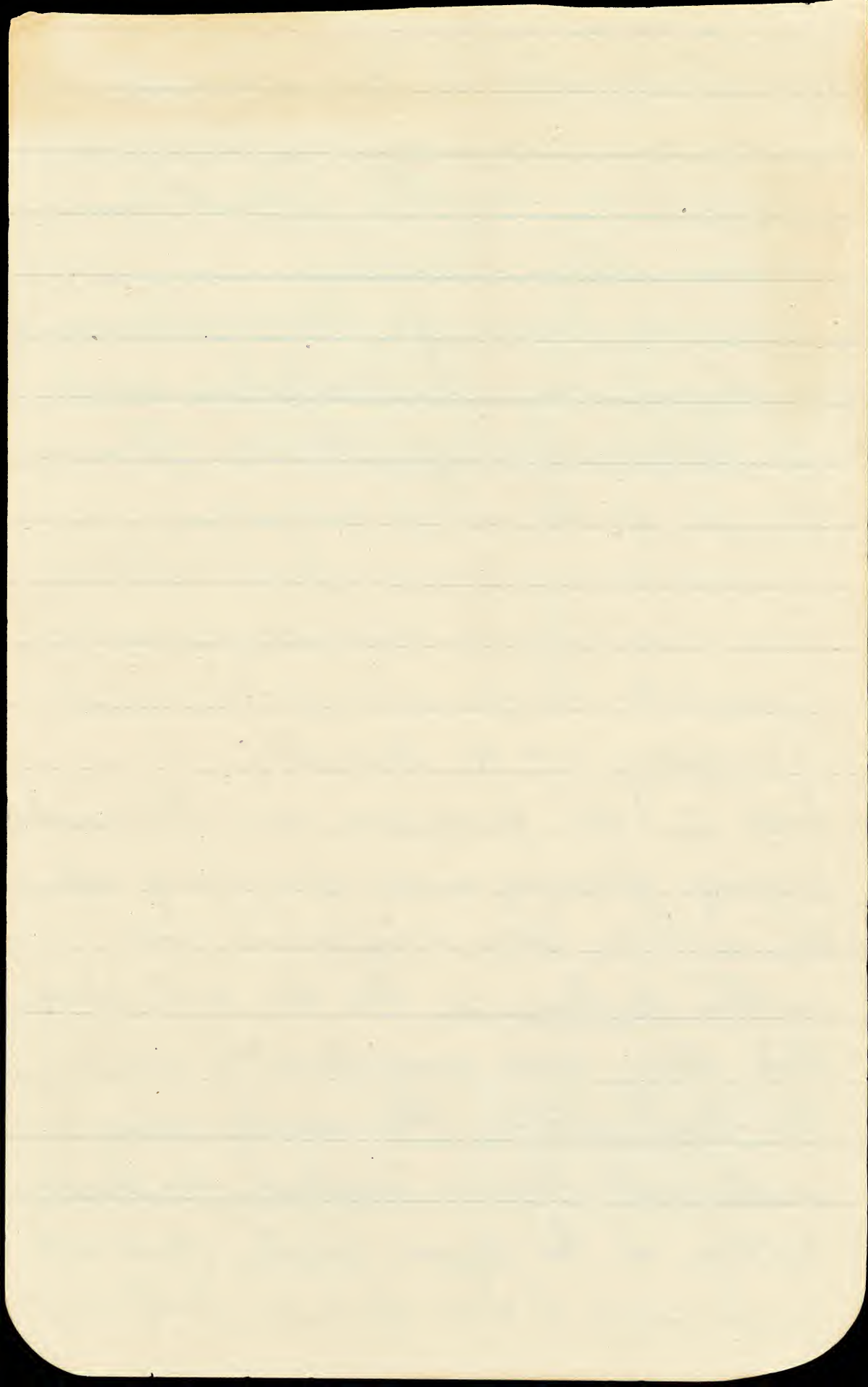
Saw a Scott Oriole
near La Mesa.

Saw a pair of Mountain
Quail in the upper end
of Blair Valley, near the
head of the box canon.

Saw very few butterflies
in the box canon as we
passed them about 4-30

Monday 29th March.

Out in the forenoon on the road
drying flowers and cleaning up
the cabin. The vegetation was
rather backward tho the soil shows
that there was considerable rain
the last storm. The early rains
could not have reached La Puerta
Valley, as the Agave deserti had not
responded. I saw perhaps half a



stems beginning to grow - none
high enough to show any flower
buds. In fact I saw no flowers of
this species anywhere on the trip.
Birds were scarce, and most of
those seen were Zonotrichia (lew-
cophrys,?). In the afternoon we drove
down to Vallecito. McCain and
Campbell are making a new
road down the Mason hill.
The roof of the old house at
Vallecito is fallen in. I watched
for bats in the evening, but saw
none, tho at this season I have
previously found them abundant
here. I found two Bohemian
Waxwings near the water trough;
they had apparently been killed
with a .22 cal rifle some weeks
previously. The flesh was not
dried up, but was badly decomposed.

Thursday March 30th,
Harry Swette found a nest with two
eggs on a bunch of mistletoe in
a mesquit tree a few yards from
our camp. He saw the bird fly
away and says it was a Cooper's
Hawk, which the eggs look like,
Phainopepla are common. Saw one
western robin. In the forenoon
we drove down to ~~Vallecito~~
stopping on the way ^{Savidge Creek} to gather
flowers, which were in fine
condition below Vallecito. In the
afternoon John, George and I took
a hike into the clay hills
south of Savidge Creek, to look for
fossils. Found nothing but rock
oysters, except two or three fragments
of large oysters. Saw the rock
oysters in a number of places,
some weathered out on the
surface, and some in strata

composed of finely broken pieces,
John and George went up to the
summit of the ridge between
Cavizzo Valley and Coyote Hills
Valley. On the summit they
found a stratum of marble
that contained many Pholad
borings. The clay hills are
exceedingly rough. They are
the remains of an old plain
or mesa deeply cut by numerous
ravines. In most cases the
~~mesa~~ ridges between the
ravines are worn to sharp
edges that one could sit
astride of. In a few places
there are remains of the old mesa,
this is thickly covered with
gravel and boulders. Many of
the boulders are of very hard
marble, of mottled and streaked
light and dark gray, and
often etched by the wind blown sands.

Wednesday, March 31st.

Clouds poured just over the summits of the mountains all day, indicating a storm on the other side. Until this morning we have found only gentle breezes. At sunrise the wind grew strong and blew hard all day. We drove to Imperial and El Centro in the forenoon, and to Boyote Wells and Mountain Spring in the afternoon, camping in a vacant house near the top of the grade. Men are working on the roads both above and below Mountain Spring, apparently getting ready to pave the grade. Have seen very few lizards and no snakes so far. On the desert above the main canal caterpillars were very abundant. They were feeding on various species of plants and

were very active. Near Dixie Island
they were attempting to crawl across
the paved highway, but the strong
wind rolled them back to the
edge, where they were often so
thick that one could not put
a foot down without crushing
one or more. Yesterday and
the day before I saw many
"Painted Lady" butterflies (Pieris)
migrating north west. Today
the wind was too strong to
let them fly. Saw very few
birds today. The plants on
the desert were in fine condi-
tion, tho I have seen them a
little better.

Thursday, April 1st.

Drove home, got mixed at noon
and worked an hour to get out.
Got two Sycina sonoriensis at
the spring north west of Jacumba.

Saw a few Thushla dumetorum
and many Pyraeas. Flowers were
in good condition all the way.
The bird migration was not yet
under way, the most of the winter
residents are gone. I have seen
no thrashers on this trip and but
few, perhaps half a dozen, cactus
wrens. As I did not take a gun
along I did no hunting. Saw some
rabbits; jacks, bush rabbits and
cottontails, ~~the~~ They were most
plentiful near Dulzura. The
late rains had put the sandy
roads in fine condition, so we
got thru nicely, being bothered
by the sand in only one place,
on Carrizo Creek, which held
us but a few minutes. There
has been very little travel on
the old Carrizo Creek road
lately.

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